

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PARAMA 00769 301843Z
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
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R 301303Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4361
INFO AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN
AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT NS
SUBJ: PARLIAMENT GIVES VOTE OF CONFIDENCE TO ARRON CABINET

REF: PARAMARIBO 738

1. IN THE EARLY MORNING HOURS OF MAY 26, SURINAM'S
39-MEMBER PARLIAMENT APPROVED PRIME MINISTER ARRON'S MARCH
15 POLICY STATEMENT BY A STRAIGHT PARTY LINE VOTE OF 21-13.
THIS COMPLETES PARLIAMENTARY CONSIDERATION OF THE POLICIES
PUT FORWARD BY THE ARRON CABINET TO GUIDE GOS DECISION
MAKING THROUGH THE END OF 1981 AND IS THE EQUIVALENT OF A
VOTE OF CONFIDENCE IN THE NEW GOVERNMENT WHICH TOOK OFFICE
IN LATE DECEMBER LAST YEAR.

2. PRIOR TO PASSAGE OF THE MOTION APPROVING THE POLICY
STATEMENT, SIX OPPOSITION MOTIONS WERE REJECTED BY SIMILAR
MAJORITIES. THESE MOTIONS INVOLVED THE FOLLOWING POINTS:
(A) TO URGE THE GOVERNMENT NOT TO RAISE TAXES;(B) TO END
"ILLEGAL" ADVANCES BY THE CENTRAL BANK TO THE STATE; (C) TO
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PAGE 02 PARAMA 00769 301843Z

INVOLVE THE ENTIRE POPULATION IN DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES THROUGH
NATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS AND NOT PARTY POLITICS; (D) TO PROVIDE
BROADCAST TIME TO THE OPPOSITION ON THE GOVERNMENT- OWNED
RADIO AND TV STATIONS; AND (E) TO COMPENSATE THE PRIVATELY-
OWNED RADIO APINTI FOR ITS COSTS AND LOSS OF INCOME IN BROAD-
CASTING PARLIAMENT'S DEBATE OF THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY
STATEMENT.

3. DURING THE COURSE OF THE CONCLUDING DEBATE ON THE POLICY STATEMENT, ARRON ADDRESSED HIMSELF TO CONCERNS ABOUT SURINAM'S WEAKENED BALANCE OF PAYMENTS POSITION REFLECTED IN THE 1977 DEFICIT, THE FIRST MAJOR DEFICIT IN FIFTEEN YEARS. ARRON EXPLAINED THE CAUSES OF THIS DEVELOPMENT AS INCLUDING INCREASES IN THE PRICES OF INDUSTRIAL GOODS WHICH ARE PARTIALLY DEPENDENT ON OIL PRICES; THE DEVALUATION OF THE U.S. DOLLAR, TO WHICH THE SURINAM GUILDER IS TIES, WITH RESPECT TO WEST EUROPEAN AND JAPANESE CURRENCIES; AND INCREASING IMPORTS OF FOREIGN GOODS.

4. COMMENT: THE FINAL PARLIAMENTARY SESSION DEALING WITH THE POLICY STATEMENT CARRIED ON THE RATHER TUMULTUOUS CONDUCT WHICH HAD CHARACTERIZED THE DEBATE FROM THE BEGINNING. IN THE LAST TWO DAYS OF DEBATE, AT LEAST THREE OPPOSITION

MEMBERS WERE EXPELLED FROM THE CHAMBER (ONE OF THEM FORCIBLY ESCORTED OUT BY POLICEMEN) AFTER INCIDENTS OF NAMECALLING AND REFUSAL TO ACCEPT DECISIONS OF THE CHAIRMAN. THE TRAGI-COMIC WAY IN WHICH PARLIAMENT CARRIED OUT ITS DEBATE ON THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICIES HAS RAISED QUESTIONS AMONG THOUGHTFUL SURINAMERS AS TO THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THEIR PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM AND THE QUALIFICATIONS OF THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN ELECTED TO REPRESENT THE PEOPLE. THIS CONCERN WILL MOST LIKELY

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PAGE 03 PARAMA 00769 301843Z

BE FORGOTTEN IF PARLIAMENT NOW SETTLES DOWN TO BUSINESSLIKE CONDUCT OF THE PROPOSALS WHICH WILL BE PUT BEFORE IT FOR CONSIDERATION, BUT IF PARLIAMENT'S PUBLIC PERFORMANCE CONTINUES TO DETRACT FROM ITS DIGNITY AND ITS ACCEPTANCE AS THE BASIC INSTITUTION IN A DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT, MANY WILL COME TO WONDER WHETHER PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY IS IN FACT SUITABLE FOR SURINAM.

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